



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

11 through 12

On motion of Supervisor Burke, seconded by Supervisor Knabe, unanimously carried, the attached recommendations of the Chairperson of the Los Angeles County Audit Committee, identified as Synopsis Nos. 11 through 12 were adopted. Following is a summary accounting of the attachments:

11. Recommendation: Approve policy revision requesting County departments to notify the Department of Public Social Services whenever they intend to fill vacancies for entry-level permanent and temporary clerical positions for Policy #9.120 Employment of Qualified GAIN/GROW Participants of the online Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Policy Manual; and extend the sunset review date of the Policy to September 24, 2005. APPROVE
12. Recommendation: Approve policy revision providing standardized language for new County contracts, renewals and amendments for consideration of GAIN/GROW participants for employment openings and for the inclusion of historical hiring practices of GAIN/GROW participants in bids and proposals for Policy #5.050 Contractor's Use of GAIN/GROW Participants of the online Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Policy Manual; and extend the sunset review date of the Policy to September 24, 2005. APPROVE

4020502-11mm

Attachments (2)

February 5, 2002

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Los Angeles County AUDIT COMMITTEE

1st District
Clinton Tatum, Vice Chair
2nd District
Brence Culp
3rd District
Sheri Sakamoto
4th District
Angela Muzzle
5th District

January 11, 2002

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

ONLINE BOARD POLICY MANUAL SUNSET REVIEW PROCESS -- POLICY #5.050 CONTRACTOR'S USE OF GAIN/GROW PARTICIPANTS (ALL DISTRICTS AFFECTED) (3 VOTES)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Approve policy revision providing standardized language for new County contracts, renewals and amendments for consideration of GAIN/GROW participants for employment openings and for the inclusion of historical hiring practices of GAIN/GROW participants in bids and proposals for Policy #5.050 Contractor's Use of GAIN/GROW Participants of the online Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Policy Manual; and to extend the sunset review date to September 24, 2005.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

This policy encourages businesses that contract with the County to use Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) or General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW) participants through the inclusion of standard language in solicitation documents, contracts and contract renewals and amendments.

FISCAL/FINANCING IMPACTS:

No fiscal impact.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

Previous Board Orders relating to this policy include:


- April 8, 1997 Board Order, Synopsis 63 establishes the GAIN program as a means of finding permanent jobs for Los Angeles County residents who receive Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).
- July 15, 1997 Board Order, Synopsis 60.
- August 12, 1997 Board Order, Synopsis 62.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS):

This revision encourages contractors to consider hiring GAIN/GROW participants for gainful employment.

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Respectfully submitted,


BOBI JOHNSON
Chairperson, Audit Committee

BJ: ml

cc: Chief Administrative Officer
Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors
Commission Services
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller
Department of Human Resources
Department of Public Social Services
Internal Services Department

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Los Angeles County BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY MANUAL

Policy #:	Title:	Effective Date:
5.050	Contractor's Use of GAIN/GROW Participants	10/06/01

(See also 9.120)

PURPOSE

Encourage businesses that contract with the County to use Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) or General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW) participants through the inclusion of standard language in solicitation documents, contracts and contract renewals and amendments.

REFERENCE

April 8, 1997 Board Order, Synopsis 63

July 15, 1997 Board Order, Synopsis 60

August 12, 1997 Chief Administrative Office Board Letter, "Plan for Encouraging County Contractors to Participate in Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Hiring"

August 12, 1997 Board Order, Synopsis 62

October 6, 1997 Chief Administrative Office memo, "Standard Contract Clauses - GAIN Program Hiring"

POLICY

All new County contracts, renewals and amendments shall include standard language that requires contractors to consider GAIN or GROW participants when hiring. Future solicitation documents shall establish a minimum threshold requirement that bidders/proposers demonstrate a history of hiring GAIN or GROW participants or a willingness to hire them.

Standard language to be used in all new County contracts, renewals and amendments:

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**CONSIDERATION OF GREATER AVENUES FOR INDEPENDENCE (GAIN) OR
GENERAL RELIEF OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK (GROW) PARTICIPANTS FOR
EMPLOYMENT**

Should contractor require additional or replacement personnel after the effective date of this agreement, contractor shall give consideration for any such employment openings to participants in the County's Department of Public Social Services' Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program or General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW) Program who meet contractor's minimum qualifications for the open position. County will refer GAIN/GROW participants, by job category, to contractor.

Note: In the event that both laid-off County employees and GAIN/GROW participants are available for hiring, County employees shall be given first priority.

Standard Language to be used in all solicitation documents:

Consideration of GAIN/GROW Participants for Employment

Should contractor require additional or replacement personnel after the effective date of this agreement, contractor shall give consideration for any such employment openings to participants in the County's Department of Public Social Services' Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program or General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW) Program who meet contractor's minimum qualifications for the open position. County will refer GAIN/GROW participants, by job category, to contractor.

Note: In the event that both laid-off County employees and GAIN/GROW participants are available for hiring, County employees shall be given first priority.

As a threshold requirement for consideration for contract award, bidders/proposers shall demonstrate a proven record of hiring GAIN/GROW participants or shall attest to a willingness to consider GAIN/GROW participants for any future employment opening if they meet the minimum qualifications for that opening. Additionally, bidders/proposers shall attest to a willingness to provide employed GAIN/GROW participants access to the bidders'/proposers' employee mentoring program, if available, to assist these individuals in obtaining permanent employment and/or promotional opportunities. Bidders/proposers who are unable to meet this requirement shall not be considered for this award.

Bidders/proposers shall complete and return the form, "Attestation of Willingness to Consider GAIN/GROW Participants," Attachment _____, hereunder, with their proposal.

ATTACHMENT _____

ATTESTATION OF WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER GAIN/GROW PARTICIPANTS

As a threshold requirement for consideration for contract award, bidders/proposers shall demonstrate a proven record of hiring GAIN/GROW participants or shall attest to a willingness to consider GAIN/GROW participants for any future employment openings if they meet the minimum qualifications for the openings. Additionally, bidders/proposers shall attest to a willingness to provide employed GAIN/GROW participants access to the bidders'/proposer's employee mentoring program, if available, to assist these individuals in obtaining permanent employment and/or promotional opportunities. Bidders/proposers shall complete, sign, and return with their proposal request this form. Bidders/proposers who are unable to meet this requirement shall not be considered for contract award.

Bidder/proposer shall complete this form to indicate their proposal request:

- A. Bidder/proposer has a proven record of hiring GAIN/GROW participants.

_____ YES _____ NO
(Subject to verification by County)

- B. Bidder/proposer is willing to consider GAIN/GROW participants for any future employment openings if the GAIN/GROW participant meets the minimum qualifications for the opening. "Consider" means that bidder/proposer is willing to interview qualified GAIN/GROW participants.

_____ YES _____ NO

If YES, state the name and telephone number of the person whom the County may contact to refer GAIN/GROW Participants: _____

- C. Bidder/proposer is willing to provide employed GAIN/GROW participants access to its employee mentoring program, if available.

_____ YES _____ NO _____ N/A (program not available)

BIDDER/PROPOSER

(Type or Print Name of Firm)

By _____

Type or Print Name: _____

Type or Print Title: _____

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

Chief Administrative Department
Department of Human Resources
Department of Public Social Services
County Counsel
Internal Services Department

DATE ISSUED/SUNSET DATE

Issue Date: August 12, 1997

Reissue Date: September 24, 2001

Sunset Date: August 12, 2001

Sunset Review Date: September 24, 2005

<mailto:countypolicy@bos.co.la.ca.us>

SYN. NO. 63

AGN.NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

April 8, 1997

Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, approximately 300,000 people in Los Angeles County who receive Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits will have to find permanent jobs within a specified period of time or lose their assistance. The County will seek to train many of these AFDC recipients for the work force through the Greater Avenues of Independence (GAIN) program. GAIN participants are given training and are able to find jobs in a variety of occupations including, but not limited to: manufacturing, general office and clerical positions, food service, education, transportation, health care, construction trades, building and grounds maintenance, as well as security services.

Many of the occupations for which GAIN participants are trained are utilized in the delivery of County services. Some of these services are delivered directly by County employees, but many others are delivered through Proposition A contracts with private sector companies. The private firms that hold these contracts should do their

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Y/B

Molina

MOTIONAdopt

Burke _____

Knabe _____

~~Antonovich~~ _____

Yaroslavsky _____

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share to provide jobs for welfare recipients who participate in GAIN. If welfare reform is going to work, the private sector must participate in joint public-private efforts to employ welfare recipients.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) be instructed to report back to the Board of Supervisors in 45 days with a plan which evaluates the feasibility of methods to encourage companies which contract with the County to participate in GAIN through training and/or hiring of welfare recipients. As part of this effort, the CAO should establish criteria and thresholds of participation for the types of companies and contractors which could participate in the hiring of welfare recipients through GAIN.

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MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Joanne Sturges, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Chief Administrative Officer

At its meeting held April 8, 1997, the Board took the following action:

63

The following item was called up for consideration:

The Chief Administrative Officer's recommendation to approve response to the 1996-97 recommendations of the Grand Jury, Social Services Committee, pertaining to the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program administered by the Department of Public Social Services; instruct the Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors to transmit copies of the report to the Grand Jury upon approval by the Board and to place a copy of the report on file with the Superior Court.

Supervisor Yaroslavsky made the following statement:

"Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, approximately 300,000 people in Los Angeles County who receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits will have to find permanent jobs within a specified period of time or lose their assistance. The County will seek to train many of these AFDC recipients for the work force through the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program. GAIN participants are given training and are able to find jobs in a variety of occupations including, but not limited to: manufacturing, general office and clerical positions, food service, education transportation, health care, construction trades, building and grounds maintenance, as well as security services.

(Continued on Page 2)

Syn. 63 (Continued)

"Many of the occupations for which GAIN participants are trained are utilized in the delivery of County services. Some of these services are delivered directly by County employees, but many others are delivered through Proposition A contracts with private sector companies. The private firms that hold these contracts should do their share to provide jobs for welfare recipients who participate in GAIN. If welfare reform is going to work, the private sector must participate in joint public-private efforts to employ welfare recipients."

Therefore, on motion of Supervisor Yaroslavsky, seconded by Supervisor Burke, unanimously carried (Supervisor Antonovich being absent), the Board took the following actions:

- a. Adopted the Chief Administrative Officer's attached recommendations; and
- b. Instructed the Chief Administrative Officer to report back to the Board within 45 days with a plan which evaluates the feasibility of methods to encourage companies who contract with the County to participate in the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program through training and/or hiring of welfare recipients; and as part of this effort, establish criteria and thresholds of participation for the types of companies and contractors which participate in the hiring of welfare recipients through GAIN.

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Attachment

Copies distributed:

Each Supervisor
County Counsel
Director of Personnel
Director of Public Social Services
Executive Officer/Clerk
of the Superior Court
Foreman, Los Angeles County Grand Jury



County of Los Angeles
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

713 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 974-1101

DAVID E. JANSSEN
Chief Administrative Officer

Board of Supervisors

GLORIA MOLINA
First District

YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

April 8, 1997

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**RESPONSE TO THE 1996-97 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT-SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE (3 VOTES)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Approve the response to the 1996-97 recommendations of the Grand Jury, Social Services Committee, pertaining to the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program administered by the Department of Social Services.
2. Instruct the Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors to transmit copies of this report to the Grand Jury upon approval by the Board of Supervisors.
3. Instruct the Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors to place a copy of this report on file with the Superior Court.

PURPOSE OF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Section 933(c) of the California Penal Code establishes that, after the Grand Jury submits a final report, the county board of supervisors shall comment on the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury which pertain to county government matters under control of the board.

JUSTIFICATION:

In accordance with the California Penal Code, Attachment "A" reflects the response received from the Department of Public Social Services regarding the 1996-97 County of Los Angeles Grand Jury, Social Services Committee, Final Report.

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The Honorable Board of Supervisors
April 8, 1997
Page 2

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact related to the recommendations.

FINANCING:

Not applicable.

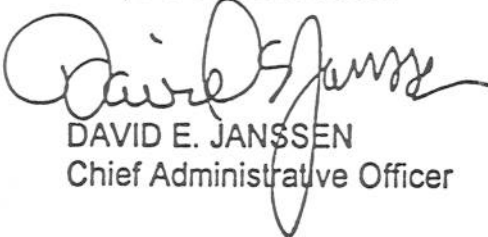
FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

Not applicable.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS):

Not applicable.

Respectfully submitted,



DAVID E. JANSSEN
Chief Administrative Officer

DEJ:LMJ
JS:vyg5

Attachments

c: County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller
Grand Jury
Executive Officer, Clerk of the Superior Court
Director, Department of Public Social Services

SYN:# 12

OF FEB 5 2002

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LYNN W. BAYER
DIRECTOR

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
12860 CROSSROADS PARKWAY SOUTH, CITY OF INDUSTRY, CALIFORNIA 91746 / TEL (310) 908-8400

March 18, 1997

Chief Administrative Office
Finance & Operations Branch
500 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attn: Laura Jessee
Assistant Administrative Officer

Dear Ms. Jessee:

FY 1996-97 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Attached is my Department's response to the recommendations contained in the Grand Jury's Final Report on the GAIN Program Review (Attachment I and II).

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Grand Jury for acknowledging the efforts of the GAIN staff and the measured success of the GAIN Program in placement of welfare recipients in Los Angeles County. I also appreciate the opportunity to express our comments and concerns. The report gives the impression that GAIN has an equal basic education or job club emphasis. I am providing comments and suggested revisions to the report content (Attachments III through V).

Should your staff have any questions, they may contact Tony Vargas at (562) 908-8515.

Very truly yours,

Lynn W. Bayer
LYNN W. BAYER, DIRECTOR

LWB:ol

Attachments

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY GRAND JURY 1996-97 FINAL REPORT
DPSS' GAIN PROGRAM
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1

The Board of Supervisors and other County officials should urge the Governor of California and the California Department of Public Social Services to secure funding from the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) block grant from the federal government to Los Angeles County to provide and assure an adequate budget for an expanded GAIN program.

RESPONSE

We agree with the recommendation. As Los Angeles County would require an estimated \$316 million annual increase in its GAIN program to serve all able-bodied adults whose families currently receive AFDC, DPSS will continue to lobby for additional funding for an expanded GAIN program.

The FY 1996-97 GAIN program budget anticipates a proposed statewide augmentation of \$60 million for county GAIN programs. This is in addition to the \$28 million statewide augmentation for GAIN earlier this year. Los Angeles County's total GAIN allocation will increase to \$90 million with the second augmentation.

DPSS' FY 1997-98 Initial Budget Request (IBR) assumes a GAIN State allocation of \$116.7 million to maintain the staffing level of the GAIN program expansion. This will require an increase in funding from the Governor and legislature.

RECOMMENDATION #2

The Board of Supervisors and other County officials should urge the California Department of Public Social Services to continue funding for expansion of the Job Clubs in the GAIN program with Regional Directors designing format for expanded Job Clubs.

RESPONSE

We agree with the recommendation. DPSS is expanding job clubs with the additional GAIN allocation. Beginning in April, 1997, AFDC applicants at their first point of contact with our welfare offices will be offered job services as well as support services such as transportation and child care to help them quickly transition to self-sufficiency. This expansion is referred to as "GAP".

DPSS contracts with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (COE) for job services, including Job Club, for the GAIN program. The FY 1997-98 IBR includes a \$4.5 million increase in the COE Job Services Contract in order to maintain the contract service level for the GAIN expansion.

RECOMMENDATION #3

The Grand Jury recommends LEADER time line be maintained and implemented as a reliable tracking system.

RESPONSE

We agree with the recommendation. Los Angeles County is on target with the LEADER time line with complete implementation projected in May 1999. LEADER will track and calculate the reported earnings of AFDC recipients. The GAIN program is supported by a separate computer system, GEARS (GAIN Employment and Activity Reporting System), which will interface with LEADER. GEARS currently does track and report on GAIN participants who become employed. GAIN employment tracking and reporting will be modified based on new welfare-to-work regulations.

RECOMMENDATION #4

The Los Angeles County Director of the Department of Public Social Services provide for an independent private enterprise to monitor the established tracking system of participants in the GAIN program. Accountability would assure the successful implementation of GAIN. The MDRC audit is an example of an independent tracking system.

RESPONSE

We agree with the intent of the recommendation. MDRC is currently under contract with DPSS to provide tracking and study of the GAIN participant population until FY 1999-2000.

DPSS' GEARS computer system used for GAIN participant tracking, reporting, payment, and interface with GAIN contractors, allows the Department to accurately track participants in the GAIN program. LEADER will also include a large tracking component that via interface with state systems will enable DPSS to track individuals across county and state lines.

RECOMMENDATION #5

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services develop the GAIN program for franchise as a model program for welfare-to-work programs in other states.

RESPONSE

We agree with the recommendation. The MDRC study report released in February 1997 (Attachment II), provides key lessons from Los Angeles County for other states, particularly large urban areas, that wish to shift to a work first program model.

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EMBARGOED UNTIL FEBRUARY 26, 1997

The contents of this report are not for quotation,
publication, or distribution until February 26, 1997. Stories may be
published or broadcast on that date.

Changing to a Work First Strategy:
Lessons from Los Angeles County's
GAIN Program for Welfare Recipients

Evan Weissman

MDRC

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation
3 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016
88 Kearny Street, Suite 1800, San Francisco, CA 94108

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, policymakers and the public alike have put increasing emphasis on moving welfare recipients into employment. By placing time limits on federally funded welfare receipt and creating demanding work requirements, the 1996 federal welfare reform legislation magnified the urgency of states' efforts to move recipients quickly into jobs. Large urban areas face a dual challenge in implementing successful welfare-to-work programs: First, there is no proven effective model for full-scale welfare-to-work programs in the nation's largest central cities; second, institutional change in a large welfare department may be much more difficult than in a smaller agency.

This report explores how one of the nation's largest urban areas—Los Angeles County—made a radical shift in the way it operated the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program. GAIN is California's name for the federal Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program, which offered employment and training services for recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). In the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, JOBS and AFDC were consolidated under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. Between 1993 and 1995, Los Angeles County shifted its welfare-to-work program from one that emphasized basic education—Adult Basic Education, preparation for the GED (high school equivalency test), high school diploma courses, and classes in English as a Second Language—to one focused on speedy entry into the workforce. The new program is called Jobs-First GAIN, and it offers lessons to other programs around the nation that are also looking for ways to shift to an emphasis on quick entry into work.¹

The Importance of Los Angeles's Experience

At a conference several years ago, the chief administrator of a large JOBS program was heard telling the director of Riverside County, California's, respected welfare department that she admired his accomplishments and would love to shift to a similar employment-focused welfare program model. But, she added, such a change was simply not feasible in a big city like hers, with many conflicting perspectives and interests. Los Angeles County faced such perceived obstacles in 1993 when it began to shift its program.

Prior evaluations have addressed the challenges and lessons of shifting to an employment-focused program, but these studies have mainly been in small- to medium-sized localities.² Los Angeles County GAIN represents a special case because of its large scale. Los Angeles County is the most populous in the nation, with nearly 10 million people spread over

¹ The data for this report come primarily from multiple visits to the Los Angeles GAIN program in late 1995 and early 1996, including structured interviews, observation of program activities, and conversations with GAIN participants and program staff. (The scope of the field research is detailed in Appendix A of the report.) Data on the GAIN program as it existed prior to the shift to a work first focus come largely from MDRC's six-county GAIN evaluation.

² See, for example, Pavetti and Duke, 1995; Mead, 1995; Bardach, 1993; and Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, 1994.

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programs, Los Angeles GAIN had a strong emphasis on *basic* education. Some other education programs focus on post-secondary education or vocational training, and may include direct links between education and the job market. In contrast to education-focused models is the quick job entry model, which is based on the view that even a low wage job is a positive first step and that job advancement will come from the experience of working. This second approach is often referred to as a "work first" model. Riverside County GAIN had this employment philosophy and goal, but also offered a significant amount of basic education, though less than in any other county's GAIN program studied in the six-county GAIN evaluation.⁴

While many factors—such as the local labor market, welfare caseload demographics, and the availability of employment and training services outside of the program—may influence a welfare-to-work program's ability to produce impacts, a program's approach regarding an employment versus an education focus is a major factor in determining its success in achieving its goals. Based on findings from prior studies of welfare-to-work programs, and especially the finding that Riverside's employment-focused program had the largest earnings and AFDC impacts of any previously studied large-scale program, Los Angeles GAIN administrators decided to adopt and adapt the work first model.

The work first program model. There is no definitive model for a work first program; rather, there are a number of best practices that have been identified in the field, and various options or trade-offs that may be made in implementing the program. Work first programs all share the overall philosophy that quick job entry is the best path toward moving from welfare to employment. They also typically share many of the following characteristics: a pervasive message to participants that employment is both the goal and the expectation of the program; job search as the first activity for most or all participants; job development with an active link to the employer community; some short-term education, training, or work experience, followed by or in combination with additional job search; a commitment of adequate resources to serve the full mandatory population; enforcement of the participation mandate; and an outcome-focused and cost-conscious management style.⁵

⁴As part of the evaluation of the JOBS program being conducted by MDRC, these two program models are now being compared "head to head" in three sites, including Riverside County. Early findings indicate that the work first model that was implemented in the three sites led to an increase in the employment and earnings of welfare recipients, relative to members of a control group, in the first two years after their program entry. It also led to a decrease in AFDC payments for those referred to the program compared to those in the control group. The education-focused model, as a result of the up-front time spent in education activities, did not lead to employment or earnings impacts in the first year, but did begin to show earnings gains in the second year after program entry. The education approach did lead to AFDC reductions in the first two years, though these savings were not as large as those seen in the work first model. Longer-term follow-up will show whether the impacts will increase, and will indicate which program model has the largest impacts over a period of four to five years. See Hamilton et al., forthcoming. For early findings from this evaluation, see Freedman and Friedlander, 1995.

⁵For more information on work first programs, see Amy Brown, *Work First: How to Implement an Employment-Focused Approach to Welfare Reform* (New York: MDRC, 1997), a step-by-step guide to implementing work first programs, based on best practices from work first programs around the nation.

play a role. And research indicates that large urban welfare-to-work programs have had very limited effectiveness in the past, making Los Angeles's efforts particularly challenging.

This question will be addressed in future reports from MDRC's evaluation, which uses a random assignment design to estimate the *impacts* of the Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN program on welfare recipients' employment—that is, changes in their earnings and welfare receipt *over and above* what would have occurred in the absence of the program. While those results are not yet available, operational data from Los Angeles GAIN administrators show that the number of jobs reported for GAIN participants has increased dramatically in the past few years—from 4,000 or 5,000 per year under the old program to over 30,000 per year under the new one. This is encouraging, but not conclusive. Placement gains may reflect improvements in the economy, changes in the types of recipients who are served by GAIN, or simply more thorough reporting and tracking of job placements. In particular, it is not clear from these kinds of data how many program participants would have found employment without the help of the Jobs-First GAIN program. Future reports from the MDRC evaluation will directly address that question.

Key Lessons from Los Angeles

The Los Angeles program's experience with its shift to a work first model offers numerous lessons for other counties and cities, particularly large urban areas, that wish to make a similar change. Los Angeles has demonstrated that institutional change within a welfare department is possible in a large urban area, and that a single department or division can effect major change, not only in the programs it administers but also, via a ripple effect, in other agencies and in the community. This experience suggests that while the special challenges faced by urban areas must be considered in program planning, these challenges do not preclude the successful implementation of a work first program model.

Some of the key lessons that may be gleaned from the experience of shifting to a work first program in Los Angeles are summarized below.

General Lessons

- To implement a work first program successfully, a large-scale urban program must ensure that all the major partners embrace the work first philosophy and share the same goals and expectations for the program. Los Angeles's ability to make the shift was facilitated by the fact that the program's senior management team was committed to the work first approach, and by the fact that management was able to consolidate administrative functions—such as contracting—and exercise direct control over the thrust and philosophy of the program.
- The shift to a work first program can be made independently of major welfare reform or other changes. Los Angeles County was able to shift to the Jobs-First program from within the GAIN division of its welfare department, and did so prior to the 1996 federal welfare law. All the same, there were limits to what GAIN alone could accomplish. In particular, the

providers to select the recipients they would enroll, GAIN ensured that providers could not limit services to those who were most likely to find employment on their own. Also, by measuring and placing value on job retention, administrators indicated to staff that the program would not be considered a success if the majority of recipients who found work quickly lost their jobs.

- Program administrators must ensure that staff understand and support the new quick employment goal of the program. By communicating the new Jobs-First program's goal and philosophy to staff via memos, an all-staff conference, and other means, Los Angeles GAIN administrators were able to foster a rapid change in the mind set and actions of staff.
- Participants need to clearly and repeatedly hear the work first message before they can understand and react positively to it. GAIN staff found that they needed to present the work first message often to ensure that participants understood the new goal of the program. To do so, staff at all agencies providing services needed to communicate well with one another. When they did not—especially when they were located at different offices or worked for different agencies—participants occasionally received mixed messages about the goal of the program and what they were expected to accomplish in the short and long term. This experience shows that all-staff conferences and other meetings between GAIN and provider staff can help staff to improve their communications with one another and, as a result, can clarify and strengthen the message that is presented to participants.
- When staff are able to ensure that recipients *understand* and *receive* benefits and transitional services once they begin working, participants are more likely to accept the work first message. Staff in Los Angeles often found it difficult to explain California's "Work Pays" and other welfare rules, which allow people to continue to receive welfare and transitional services when they take low-paying jobs. They also often found it difficult to ensure that working participants received these benefits. When these benefits were well understood and used, recipients and staff alike were more likely to be supportive and accepting of the work first message.
- Changes in the message presented at income maintenance (the welfare office) may strengthen—but are not a precondition for—a work first program. Los Angeles GAIN administrators did not originally expect or attempt to make concurrent changes at the income maintenance offices. However, they soon realized that changes at income maintenance could help make the Jobs-First GAIN program more effective and might help move welfare recipients who were not in GAIN into employment. For example, income maintenance staff can strengthen the quick employment message and encourage welfare recipients to find work by telling them about the goal of GAIN, by promoting the benefits and transitional services that are available to

Conclusion

The findings presented in this report show that a fundamental shift to a work first program can be achieved, even in a large urban area and even in a program that works with long-term welfare recipients. The lessons from Los Angeles County can provide guidance to administrators and staff in other states and localities around the nation that are currently contemplating or actually making a similar change in their welfare-to-work programs.